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RYAN SWOPE
Senior Wide Receiver



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BY AI STAFF

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BY AI STAFF

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BY BRIAN DAVIS '01 & JEREMY KSIONDA '04

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FIND THE 01

On the Cover: Texas A&M officially joined the Southeastern Conference on July 1, 2012.



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WELCOME TO SEC COUNTRY!

I don't know about you, but I can't imagine ever getting tired of hearing or saying those words.

In this issue of AI, we reflect back on the ups and downs of Texas A&M's final year in the Big 12 Conference, and we look ahead to the Aggies' inaugural year in the SEC.

This past year was an emotional roller coaster for us Aggie fans. We had the highest of highs off the field with the "100-year decision" to join the SEC, and the lowest of lows on the field with another promising football season ending in utter disappointment.

In between, there were a number of unforgettable performances and agonizing defeats across the athletic programs. To reminisce about some of the biggest highlights and lowlights of 2011-12, check out our annual "Top 12 Stories" feature starting on page 19. Flip to page 6 to see who we selected for "2012 AI Athletes of the Year." Would you have chosen differently? Let us know at editor@aggiemag.com.

It's nice to look back and see where you have been, but now more than ever, we are ready to look forward to an exciting year in Texas A&M athletics.

The Aggie football program got their first official taste of life in the SEC with SEC Media Days in mid-July. And many of the nearly 1,100 media members in attendance got their first taste of Texas A&M, too. Check out our "Behind the Scenes" feature of SEC Media Days starting on page 14. Also starting there and continuing throughout this issue, you will find welcome messages from our SEC family.

Days before meeting the SEC media, the Aggies unveiled new football uniforms for their inaugural season in the nation's best conference. Flip to page 8 to see some of the features of Texas A&M's new, classic look.

Finally, with football season thankfully just around the corner, the Aggies head into uncharted territory with a new coaching staff and a mix of old and new faces on the field. We picked our five freshmen to watch this fall on page 12. And learn more about the next crop of new faces on page 10, as Coach Sumlin and his staff have nearly filled their 2013 recruiting class with six months to go before signing day.

Indeed, these are exciting times in Aggieland, full of new opportunities and new challenges. Welcome to SEC Country! Now let's go enjoy the ride.

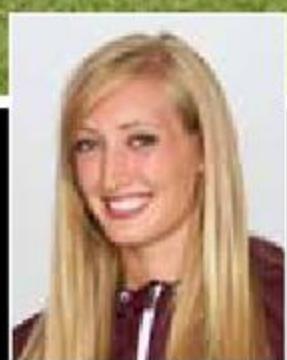
Gig'em Ags!

Brian '01



ai athletes of the year

With All-American performances in their respective sports, Randy Bullock and Breeja Larson were easy selections for 2011-12 AI Athletes of the Year. Bullock, now with the Houston Texans, led the nation in field goals last season and won the Lou Groza Place-kicker Award. Larson recently became the first Aggie swimmer to earn an Olympic gold medal culminating a spectacular sophomore campaign, which included winning four Big 12 Championships and breaking the American and U.S. Open record in the 100-yard breaststroke while winning the NCAA crown. Photos by Texas A&M Athletics, AP Images, Getty Images and Tim Binning.



2012 AI Athletes of the Year

Randy Bullock (Football) & Breeja Larson (Swimming & Diving)

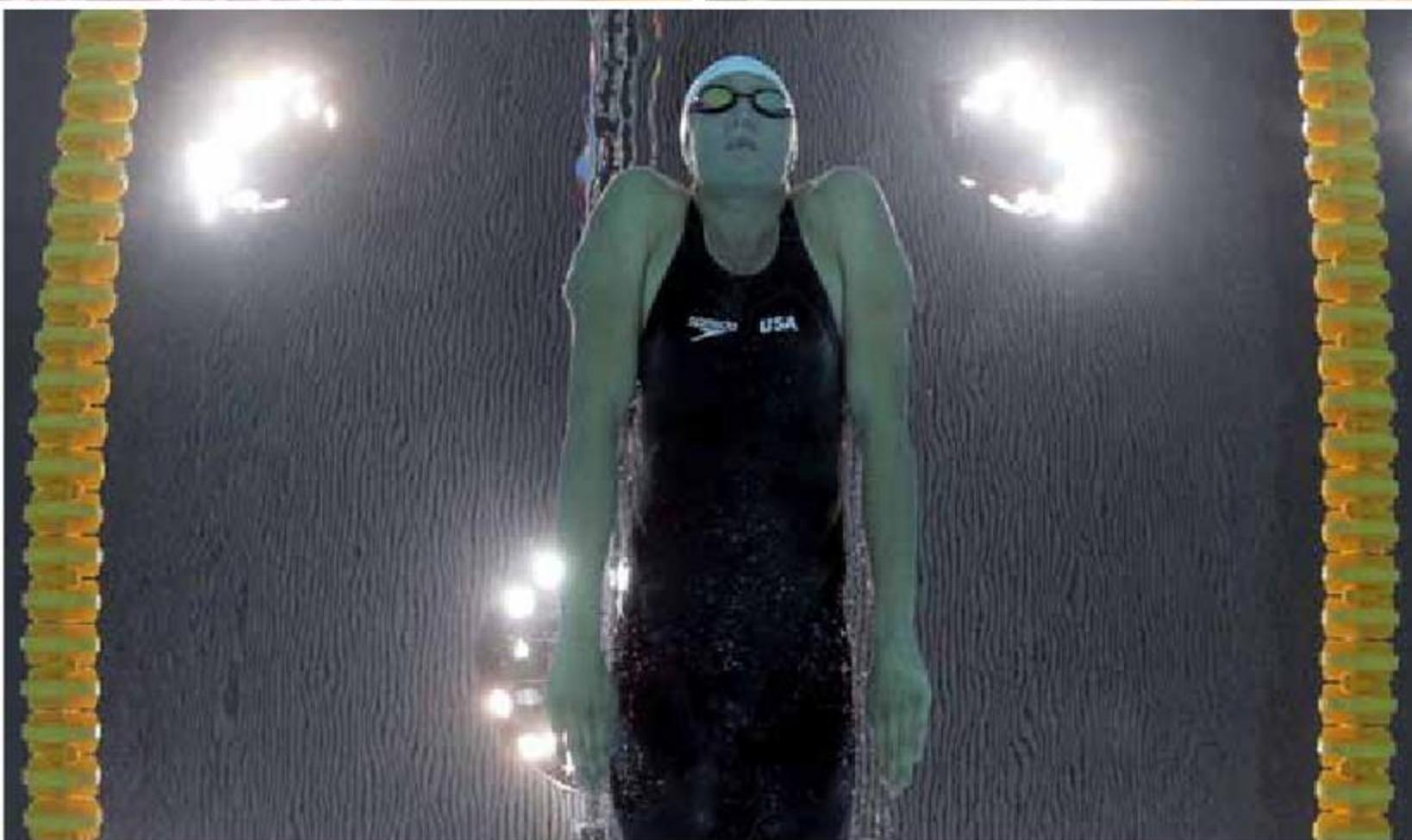
Previous Winners

2011: Von Miller (Football) & Danielle Adams (Basketball)

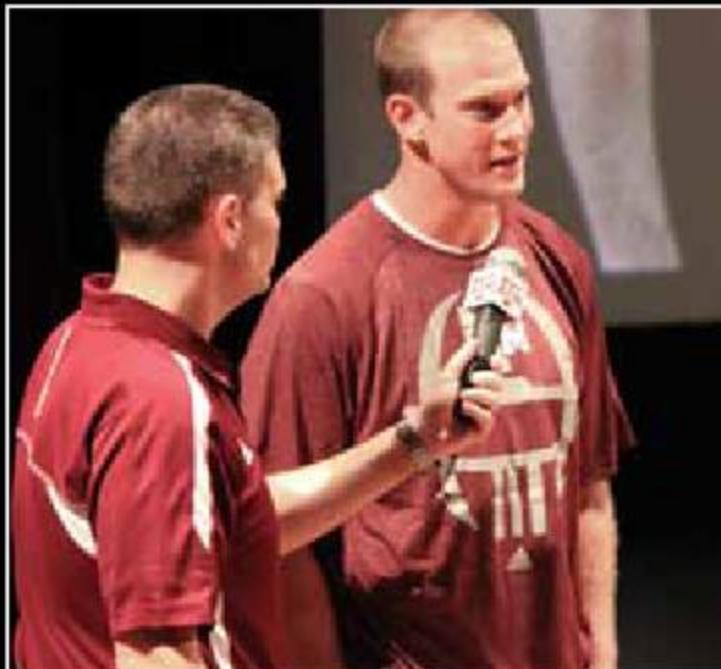
2010: Von Miller (Football)

2009: Bronson Burgoon (Men's Golf)

2008: Megan Gibson (Softball)



snapshot





back in style

On July 12, 2012, Texas A&M and adidas unveiled new Lone Star TECHFIT football uniforms for the Aggies' debut season in the Southeastern Conference. The new home maroon and away white jerseys are reminiscent of a 1970's era uniform, which featured unique vertical stripes down the shoulder. Texas A&M's Lone Star uniform features an updated logo which is a fusion of the school's traditional "ATM" mark within the state of Texas outline. The new design includes multiple innovations to reduce the weight of the jersey by 30 percent, and has integrated ventilation zones and moisture management fabric to keep players cool. Photos by Texas A&M Athletics and Rob Havens '88.

Hot on the Trail

BY JEREMY KSIONDA '04

If first year head coach Kevin Sumlin has as much success on the field as he's having on the recruiting trail, the Aggies will be the media darling of the SEC in 2012. The Aggies reached as high as number two in the national recruiting rankings this summer, and although a whopping 27 verbal commit-

ments are already in the bag, Sumlin and his coaching staff are poised to haul in a handful of additional blue chips between now and National Signing Day on February 6. Here's a closer look at each of Texas A&M's highly touted verbal commitments for the class of 2013:



Quarterback

KENNY HILL

Southlake Carroll (Southlake, TX)

Ht: 6-1 Wt: 205

Perfect fit for the Aggie offense. Led Southlake to a 5A state championship as a junior.

KOHL STEWART

St. Pius X (Houston, TX)

Ht: 6-3 Wt: 200

Huge arm with unlimited potential. Aggie legacy is also projected to be a high MLB Draft pick.

Running Back

JAMES WHITE

Dawson (Pearland, TX)

Ht: 5-11 Wt: 190

Ran for over 1,800 yards and 23 TDs as a junior. Has a great combination of size and speed.

Wide Receiver

QUINCY ADEBOYEJO

Cedar Hill (Cedar Hill, TX)

Ht: 6-3 Wt: 175

A hidden gem discovered by A&M wide receiver coach David Beaty. Has loads of raw athleticism.

LAQUVIONTE GONZALES

Cedar Hill (Cedar Hill, TX)

Ht: 5-10 Wt: 150

Small in stature, large on speed and quickness. Talent shines in space.

KYRION PARKER

Manvel (Manvel, TX)

Ht: 6-2 Wt: 185

Decommitted from LSU after one-on-one meeting with Kevin Sumlin. A big coup for A&M.

JEREMY TABUYO

St. Louis (HI) (Honolulu, HI)

Ht: 5-11 Wt: 180

His highlight reel will wow you. Good excuse to go to Hawaii to watch him play in person.

Tight End

DERRICK GRIFFIN

Rosenberg Terry (Rosenberg, TX)

Ht: 6-6 Wt: 220

Arguably the most explosive talent in the state. Could elect to play college basketball instead.

Offensive Lineman

JOAS AGUILAR

Birdville (Birdville, TX)

Ht: 6-5 Wt: 295

A mauler in every sense of the word. Under the radar prior to his commitment to A&M.

JJ GUSTAFSON

Jesuit (Dallas, TX)

Ht: 6-5 Wt: 270

Another one of the state's best. Held offers from several SEC programs.

ISHMAEL WILSON

Bishop Dunne (Dallas, TX)

Ht: 6-5 Wt: 275

One of the state's best offensive linemen. Will play early at A&M.

Defensive Tackle

ISAIAH GOLDEN

Carthage (Carthage, TX)

Ht: 6-2 Wt: 295

Big, fast and plays with a mean streak. You win in the SEC with players like Golden.

KERRICK HUGGINS

Skyline (Dallas, TX)

Ht: 6-4 Wt: 285

Big, fast and plays with a mean streak. You win in the SEC with players like Huggins.

HARDRECK WALKER

Westfield (Houston, TX)

Ht: 6-2 Wt: 280

Big, fast and plays with a mean streak. You win in the SEC with players like Walker. Notice the pattern in A&M's DT recruiting?

ROBERT ZIMMERMAN

Hutchinson C.C. (KS) (Hutchinson, KS)

Ht: 6-3 Wt: 310

Juco DTs who have three years of eligibility and qualify for midterm enrollment are a rare find.

Defensive End

JAY ARNOLD

Rockwall-Heath (Rockwall, TX)

Ht: 6-3 Wt: 235

Strong, physical and deceptive speed. Chose A&M over several other SEC schools.

JORDAN POINTS

Rockwall-Heath (Rockwall, TX)

Ht: 6-4 Wt: 270

Teammate of Arnold that simply produces on the field. Plans to enroll in December.

Linebacker

REGGIE CHEVIS

Sharpstown (Sharpstown, TX)

Ht: 6-2 Wt: 240

A true middle linebacker in a 4-3 set. Physically looks ready to contribute immediately.





DARIAN CLAIBORNE

Port Allen (LA) (Port Allen, LA)

Ht: **6-1** Wt: **215**

A Louisiana talent with loads of athleticism. Instinctive linebacker and productive quarterback.

BRETT WADE

Kennedale (Kennedale, TX)

Ht: **6-2** Wt: **215**

Excels at getting his hands on opponents and bringing them down. Moves well laterally.

EDWARD WILLIAMS

New Orleans (LA) (Warren Easton HS, LA)

Ht: **6-2** Wt: **220**

Plays several positions in high school, but future is at linebacker. Held several national offers.

Cornerback

NOEL ELLIS

Edna Karr (LA) (New Orleans, LA)

Ht: **5-10** Wt: **170**

A true cover corner in every sense of the word. A huge pickup for A&M out of Louisiana.

TAVARES GARNER

Manvel (Manvel, TX)

Ht: **6-0** Wt: **170**

Physical cornerback with an aggressive style. One of the state's top cover men.

Safety

VICTOR DAVIS

Rosenberg Terry (Rosenberg, TX)

Ht: **6-1** Wt: **185**

Fast, rangy safety with a good frame to grow on. Might be the unsung hero of this class.

SHAAN WASHINGTON

Alexandria (LA) (Alexandria, LA)

Ht: **6-3** Wt: **210**

A smart, physical safety that excels at multiple positions in high school. Reminds us of Michael Lamothe.

JONATHAN WIGGINS

Alief Taylor (Houston, TX)

Ht: **6-3** Wt: **190**

A big, physical safety that could possibly spin down to linebacker if he continues to grow.

Athlete

ALEX SEZER

Little Cypress-Mauriceville (Orange, TX)

Ht: **5-9** Wt: **175**

*Wowed the A&M coaches on the camp circuit with his speed and maturity. Plans to enroll in December. **A1***



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FIVE

FRESHMEN TO WATCH

BY BRIAN DAVIS '01

Several members of the Aggies' incoming class have impressed coaches and teammates with their talent and work ethic during summer workouts and fall camp. While a good portion of them have a chance to play as true freshmen, here are five newcomers that should see the field early and often for A&M this fall:



WR THOMAS JOHNSON (8)

Skyline (Dallas, TX)

Ht: 5-11 Wt: 180

WHY HE WILL PLAY EARLY

Has the talent to be a difference-maker in the Aggie offense.

WHY HE MIGHT NEED MORE TIME

Was slowed by a knee injury during the summer.



CB DE'VANTE HARRIS (1)

Horn (Mesquite, TX)

Ht: 5-10 Wt: 160

WHY HE WILL PLAY EARLY

Already one of the best cover corners on the roster.

WHY HE MIGHT NEED MORE TIME

Needs to add some weight to hold his own in the SEC.



DE POLO MANUKAINIU (90)

Trinity (Euless, TX)

Ht: 6-5 Wt: 255

WHY HE WILL PLAY EARLY

Is physically ready to play and depth along the d-line is a concern.

WHY HE MIGHT NEED MORE TIME

Doesn't have experience facing SEC-caliber offensive linemen.



WR SABIAN HOLMES (23)

Southlake Carroll (Southlake, TX)

Ht: 5-11 Wt: 175

WHY HE WILL PLAY EARLY

Already looks like a veteran in the Aggie offense.

WHY HE MIGHT NEED MORE TIME

One of several talented receivers fighting for playing time.



RB TREY WILLIAMS (20)

Dekaney (Spring, TX)

Ht: 5-8 Wt: 175

WHY HE WILL PLAY EARLY

Incredibly explosive with the ball in his hands.

WHY HE MIGHT NEED MORE TIME

Playing behind Christine Michael and Ben Malena. **AI**

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2012 SEC Media Days

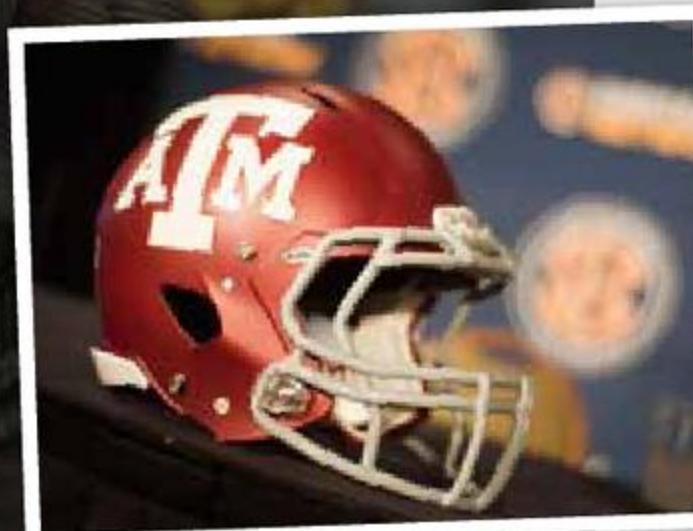
BEHIND THE SCENES



10

FUN FACTS FROM SEC MEDIA DAYS

- 1] All of the players and coaches were treated like rock stars during SEC Media Days, but Alabama coach Nick Saban was clearly the star attraction during the three-day event. Hundreds of Crimson Tide fans waited for hours in the Wynfrey Hotel lobby to get a glimpse of Saban and hopefully an autograph.
- 2] When Saban needed to go to the bathroom, he put two security guards outside the door, preventing media from joining him.
- 3] Each SEC coach signed 54 footballs for the conference office to use throughout the year for various events.
- 4] When taking the stage, Arkansas coach John L. Smith noticed a placard on the table that said, 'Do not move mic.' He looked up and asked, "Mike? Where are you?! Get up here."
- 5] Footwear quickly became the talk of the opening session when reporters noticed that Texas A&M's Luke Joeckel and Ryan Swope were both wearing cowboy boots with their suits.
- 6] There were 1,085 media credentials issued for the event, with 33 radio stations broadcasting live from radio row.
- 7] There were over 3,000 tweets using the official hash tag #SECKickoff12, which trended nationally along with Texas A&M, Nick Saban, Hugh Freeze, SEC, John L. Smith and Kevin Sumlin.
- 8] Commissioner Mike Slive fielded questions in 75 interviews.
- 9] Each player and coach rotated to 13 different areas in a 3-hour period, totalling 741 scheduled interviews combined.
- 10] Texas A&M fans were clearly excited to be watching their first SEC Media Days on the league website, as the state jumped from 8th overall in 2011 to number one a year later. Houston and Dallas were the top two cities in the country on the watch list. **AI**



WELCOME
TO THE



MIKE SLIVE
Commissioner
Southeastern Conference

On behalf of our presidents, chancellors, athletics directors, students and fans, I welcome Texas A&M University to the SEC family. Texas A&M is a nationally-prominent institution on and off the field and a great fit for the SEC tradition of excellence – athletically, academically and culturally.

Throughout this issue, you can find messages from Texas A&M's fellow SEC universities, welcoming the Aggies into the nation's premier conference.



(left) ESPN's national college football reporter Joe Schad talks with Luke Joeckel. **(above)** Sean Porter, Ryan Swope and Luke Joeckel visit with the media. **(below)** Swope, Joeckel and Porter have a little fun posing for a group photo for AI outside of their suite at the Wynfrey Hotel. **(facing page)** Kevin Sumlin makes his way through the lobby area with ESPN senior writer Ivan Maisel.



MAL MOORE
Director of Athletics
University of Alabama

The University of Alabama is excited to officially welcome the University of Missouri and Texas A&M University into the Southeastern Conference. Both schools will enhance our conference's rich tradition and heritage as a leader in collegiate athletics. All of us at the University of Alabama are looking forward to building strong competitive relationships with both institutions. On behalf of the University of Alabama – Welcome to the SEC!



2012 SEC Media Days

BEHIND THE SCENES



(top) TV crews from across the country interview Kevin Sumlin. **(above left)** Sumlin autographed 54 footballs that the SEC will use throughout the year. **(above middle)** The SEC pinwheel logo now features all 14 teams. **(above right)** Helmets for each SEC school helped make up the set for CSS (Cable Sports Southeast). **(below left)** The SEC football championship trophy now features all 14 teams as well. **(below right)** Microphones for the various stations filled the podium in the television interview room. **(bottom right)** The largest media room for print media was near capacity at times.



JEFF LONG
Vice Chancellor &
Director of Athletics
University of Arkansas

As a proud member of the Southeastern Conference, we are pleased to welcome Texas A&M University to the most competitive and successful conference in the nation. Arkansas and Texas A&M share a rich history of competition in intercollegiate athletics, including a long-time affiliation in the former Southwest Conference. In recent years, our rivalry with Texas A&M has been rekindled in football with the Southwest Classic in Cowboys Stadium. Based on the tremendous response from fans of both programs to that game, we look forward to renewing competition between the Razorbacks and the Aggies in all sports beginning in 2012.

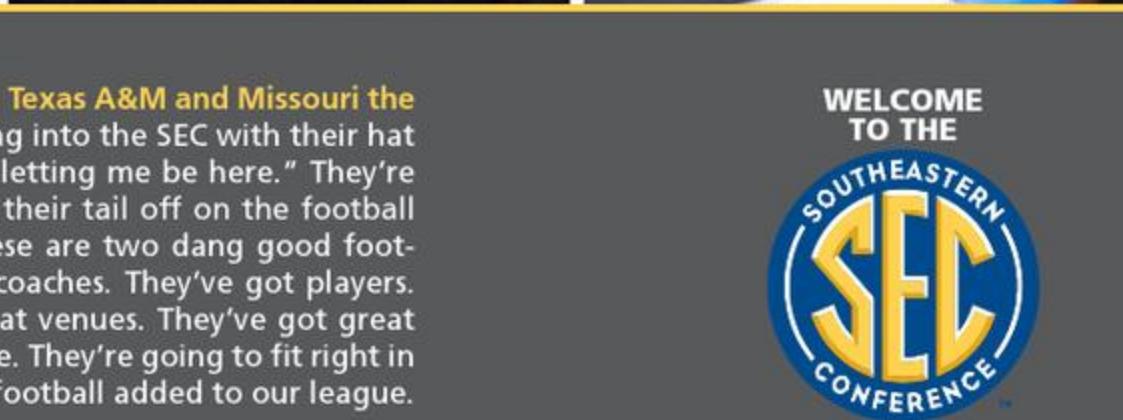
11

NOTABLE QUOTES FROM SEC MEDIA DAYS

- 1] Texas A&M coach Kevin Sumlin...** "My realistic expectations are to win. I've said that from day one. Everybody talks to me and acts like I didn't know what I was getting into when I got the job. We had already entered into an agreement with the SEC when I got the job."
- 2] Vanderbilt coach James Franklin on walking in with Alabama coach Nick Saban last year...** "He was like a rock star. People were throwing babies at him."
- 3] South Carolina coach Steve Spurrier...** "It's easier to win the national championship than the SEC. Ask Nick Saban."
- 4] Spurrier on South Carolina's schedule...** "You think I make the schedule? If I made the schedule, Georgia would be playing LSU and we'd be playing Ole Miss."
- 5] Missouri coach Gary Pinkel...** "People act like we play a bunch of high school teams. We've played in a pretty good league."
- 6] Missouri receiver T.J. Moe on the SEC compared to the Big 12...** "Things are just different here. I wouldn't be surprised if everybody here is strapped with a gun. They've also got prettier girls, the air's fresher and the toilet paper's thicker."
- 7] Arkansas coach John L. Smith on if he wants to coach the Razorbacks beyond this season...** "Well, certainly. Do I look stupid? Don't answer that!"
- 8] Arkansas running back Knile Davis on A&M and Missouri...** "I hear the rookies been talkin' noise. Sayin' the SEC ain't all that. They'll see."
- 9] LSU coach Les Miles on why their SEC Champ rings have No. 2 on them...** "Because we couldn't use No. 1."
- 10] Miles on the EA Sports commercial...** "My lines were narrow so that I could perform them effectively."
- 11] Alabama tight end Michael Williams on Saban...** "To this day I've never seen him yawn. You can't be more locked in than that." **AT**



(left) Alabama coach Nick Saban is surrounded by cameras during a radio interview. **(above)** Commissioner Mike Slive had 75 scheduled interviews, including this one with Paul Finebaum. **(below)** Les Miles, Steve Spurrier, Gene Chizik and Mark Richt make the rounds for various interviews. **(bottom left)** The SEC coaches, including Saban, Hugh Freeze and Dan Mullen, made time for the fans during media days as well.



GENE CHIZIK
Head Football Coach
University of Auburn

I don't think a lot of people are giving Texas A&M and Missouri the credit they deserve. They aren't coming into the SEC with their hat in their hand saying, "Thank you for letting me be here." They're coming in here to compete and play their tail off on the football field. You can bank on that one. These are two dang good football teams with dang good football coaches. They've got players. They've got coaches. They've got great venues. They've got great backing. It's a perfect fit for our league. They're going to fit right in here. There's going to be some good football added to our league.

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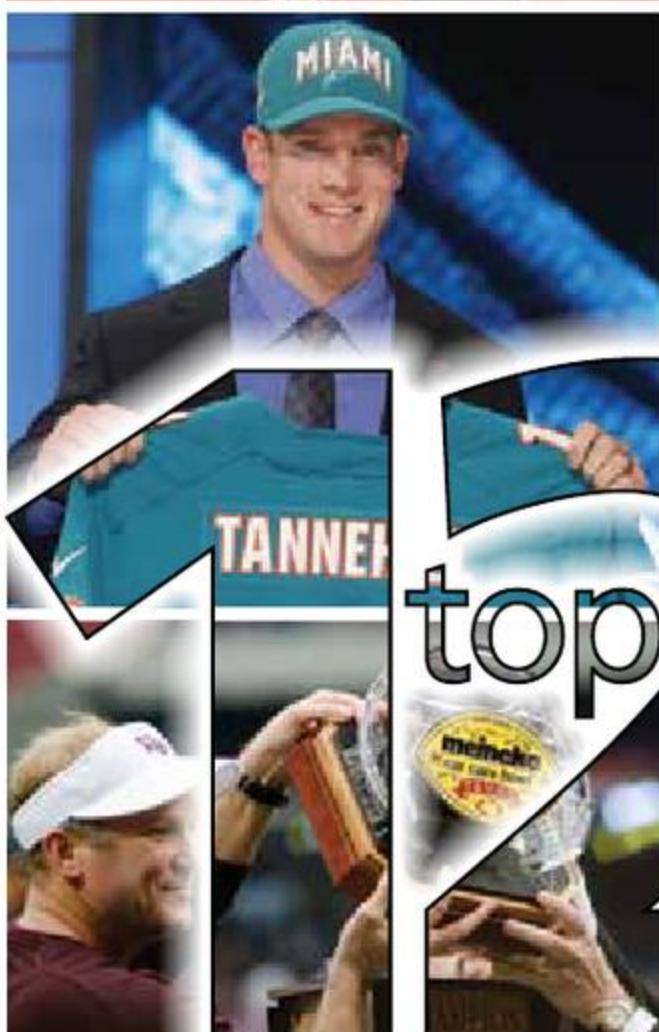
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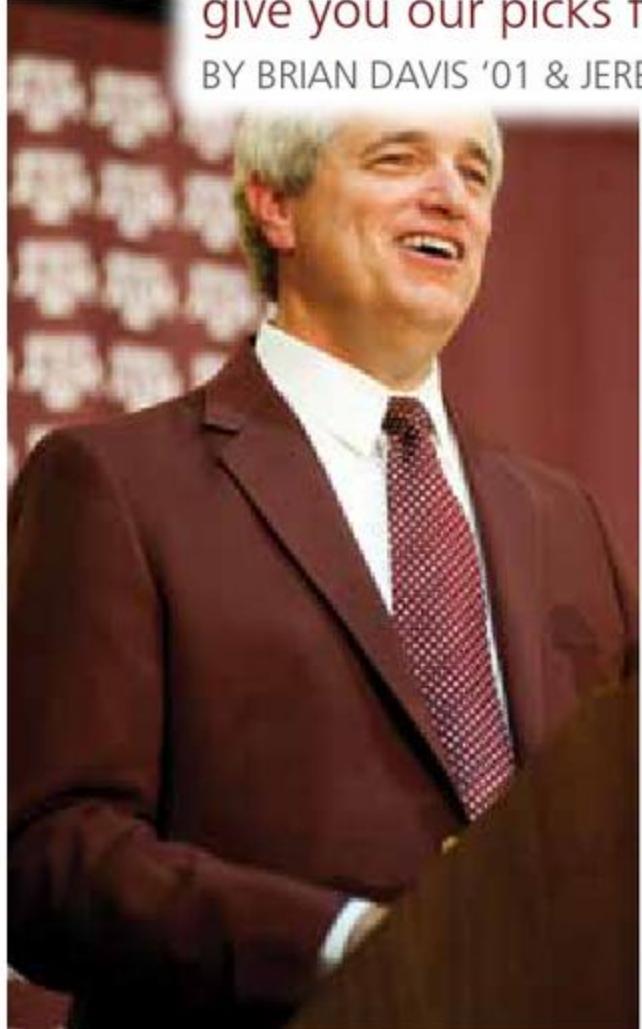
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top 2 STORIES of the year

Looking back on Texas A&M athletics in 2011-12, we give you our picks for the biggest stories of the year

BY BRIAN DAVIS '01 & JEREMY KSIONDA '04





[01] THE 100-YEAR DECISION

Our top story of 2011-12 is arguably the biggest story in the history of Texas A&M Athletics. When the stability of the Big 12 Conference was undermined again in July 2011, Texas A&M officials made the decision to explore their options for a new home. Following a Board of Regents meeting on July 21, A&M president R. Bowen Loftin placed a phone call to Southeastern Conference commissioner Mike Slive, and the ball began rolling from there. The process was expected to be finalized in a matter of weeks, but was repeatedly delayed as other universities – especially Baylor – attempted to block A&M's move. The Aggies persevered, and on September 25, 2011, the SEC announced that A&M would join the nation's preeminent collegiate athletic conference. The move became official on July 1, 2012, marking the beginning of an unprecedented chapter in Aggie history.



JASON MCCONNELL '01, BRIAN DAVIS '01 AND TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS



JEREMY FOLEY
Director of Athletics
University of Florida

The University of Florida is excited to welcome Texas A&M University to the Southeastern Conference. Texas A&M has a commitment to academic excellence and a rich history and tradition of overall athletic success. They are an ideal fit for the Southeastern Conference, and I'm sure our coaches, student-athletes and fans will embrace another great rival on the playing field. We look forward to the Aggies helping to build on the great tradition of our conference.

[02] COACHING CHANGE

Last December, Texas A&M introduced a new head football coach for the third time in a decade. The 2011 season began with lofty expectations, but after several inexplicable second half collapses led to heartbreaking losses, including the season finale to the Longhorns in what many considered the most important matchup in the history of the rivalry, Mike Sherman was relieved of his head coaching duties. After a controversial process of termination and an emotional departing press conference, Sherman moved on and was later named offensive coordinator for the Miami Dolphins. The Aggies moved on, too, and after a national search named University of Houston head coach and former A&M assistant Kevin Sumlin as Sherman's successor.



[03] NEW DIRECTION

In May, Bill Byrne announced his retirement from Texas A&M effective August 31, 2012. During Byrne's ten years as athletic director, the Aggies won eight NCAA national championships and made significant improvements in nearly every sport – especially men's and women's basketball. However, the football program struggled to achieve any sustained success during his tenure. Byrne had one year remaining on his contract, but with the move to the SEC and another coaching change in football, the timing was right for a leadership transition. Following a nationwide search for Byrne's replacement, A&M introduced Eric Hyman as the department's new athletic director on June 30. Hyman brings plenty of SEC experience to Aggieland from South Carolina where he spent seven years as the Gamecocks' athletic director. He also knows the state of Texas well, having served as TCU's athletic director from 1998 to 2005.



MICHAEL F. ADAMS
President
University of Georgia

On behalf of the entire Bulldog Nation, I want to welcome the Aggies of Texas A&M into the Southeastern Conference, the most competitive and successful athletic conference in the nation. We look forward to competing against you in the athletic arena beginning this fall, and we are excited about partnering with your institutions in education, research and service collaborations that will serve our students and alumni for life. I wish you much success in the SEC. Best of luck to you in this upcoming season.

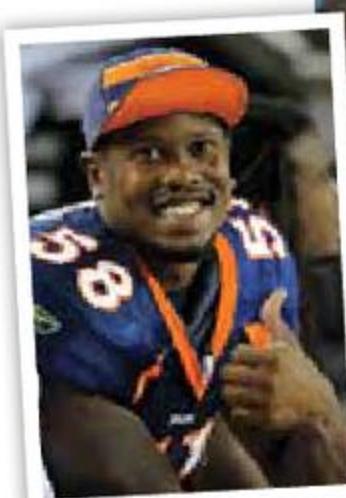
**WELCOME
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[04] THE NEXT LEVEL

Although the on-field performances of Texas A&M athletics didn't quite live up to lofty expectations, the professional ranks were kind to Aggies in 2011-12. Quarterback Ryan Tannehill was the subject of NFL experts for weeks leading up to the NFL Draft, where he became the eighth overall selection to the Miami Dolphins and the highest Aggie QB to ever be drafted. Khris Middleton elected to forego his senior season on the men's basketball team and was selected in the second round of the NBA Draft by the Detroit Pistons. And former Texas A&M All-American Von Miller was named the NFL's Defensive Rookie of the Year after posting 11.5 sacks for the Denver Broncos.

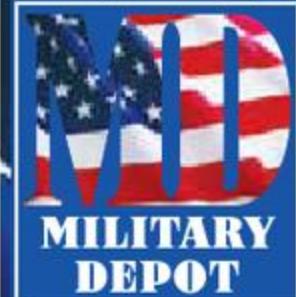


[05] FINDING SUCCESS IN HARD TIMES

In 2001, the Aggies traveled to the Astrodome and defeated the TCU Horned Frogs in the GalleryFurniture.com bowl. Texas A&M's next bowl victory didn't come until ten years later, when the Aggies had to overcome the loss of teammate Joey Villaviscio, who was killed in a car accident, and the firing of head coach Mike Sherman to defeat the Northwestern Wildcats, 33-22, in the Meineke Car Care Bowl at Reliant Stadium. Quarterback Ryan Tannehill earned MVP honors, throwing for 329 yards and a touchdown, while two of A&M's all-time leading receivers – Ryan Swope and Jeff Fuller – had 100-yard receiving performances. The Aggies and Wildcats both honored Villaviscio by wearing black and white helmet decals bearing the words "Joey V" and his number 67. Texas A&M dedicated the game to Villaviscio and Coach Sherman.



On behalf of the Big Blue Nation I want to welcome Missouri and Texas A&M to the Southeastern Conference. Our student-athletes, coaches, along with faculty, staff and fans are eager to compete with you. We also look forward to partnering with you to promote academic success for all of our institutions. We wish you the best and look forward to working together to help the SEC continue its tradition of excellence.



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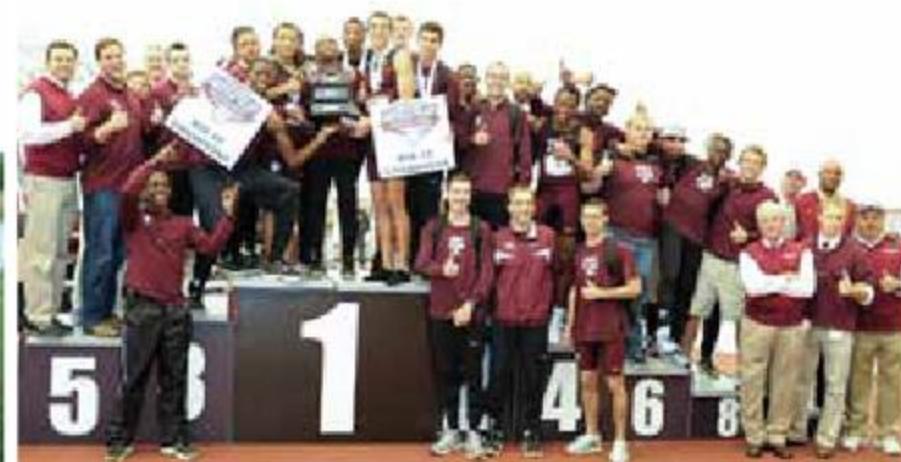
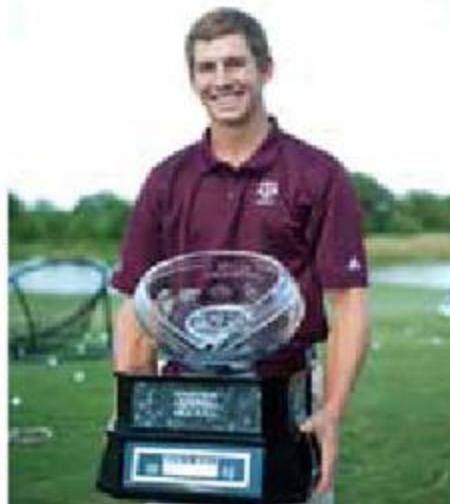


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[06] DEPARTMENT OF CHAMPIONS

Texas A&M closed out its affiliation with the Big 12 Conference with 61 conference titles after not winning a single championship in the inaugural year of the league in 1996-97. With six conference crowns in 2011-12, Texas A&M exited the Big 12 with a league-leading 38 titles since the start of the 2006-07 season. The soccer team started it off in 2011 by winning the program's twelfth conference title in 16 seasons. The Aggies then advanced to their 17th consecutive NCAA Tournament. The women's swimming and diving team won its fourth Big 12 Championship in six seasons in dominant fashion and went on to place sixth at the NCAA Championships – the Aggies' sixth straight top ten finish. The men's golf program won its first-ever Big 12 Championship over No. 1-ranked Texas behind an unforgettable performance from true freshman Ty Dunlap. Pat Henry's elite track and field program added three more Big 12 championships to its

trophy case. Texas A&M swept the indoor titles marking the first time for one school to claim both men's and women's crowns since 2006. In outdoor competition, the Aggie men successfully defended their 2011 title, while the women finished third, ending A&M's run of five consecutive conference championships. On the national level, the Aggie equestrian program won its first overall title since 2002 and also took home its fourth consecutive western national crown. Led by junior Carey Nowacek, Texas A&M became the first school in the history of the National Collegiate Equestrian Championships to advance both disciplines to the final round. The program now has a combined total of 11 national championships. The Texas A&M athletics program posted its third consecutive Top 10 finish in the Division I Learfield Sports Directors' Cup standings by finishing in ninth place in the final rankings for 2011-12.

JASON MCCONNELL '01, BRIAN DAVIS '01, TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS AND JEFF HUEHN PHOTOGRAPHY



LES MILES
Head Football Coach
Louisiana State University

I think there's great competition in the Big 12 Conference, as well. I think the venues are very comparable. I think both the Texas A&M and the Missouri venues will be fun places, exciting places for other teams to travel to. I think the best teams in that conference can certainly play with anybody in the country. So, you know, they will add to us. They have great experiences in the conference they come from, and they'll be able to compete in this conference. I think there will be a learning curve. I think they'll have to recognize that there's a little different breed of defense in this conference. But I think it's something that both schools will do very comfortably.

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TO THE





[07] OLYMPIC AGGIES

Texas A&M was represented well in the 2012 Olympic Games in London with a record number of 23 athletes and two coaches. A&M sent more athletes to London than any other university in Texas, representing their 15 respective countries. Sophomore Breeja Larson became the first Aggie swimmer to earn an Olympic gold medal with Team USA's win in the women's 4x100-meter medley relay. Larson did not swim in the Olympic final, but earned her gold medal by helping the relay advance through the preliminary heats. Larson's gold medal was the program's second medal in school history. At the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008, Christine Marshall won a bronze medal with Team USA's 4x200-meter freestyle relay.

AP IMAGES, GETTY IMAGES AND THE HOUSTON TEXANS



WELCOME
TO THE



SCOTT STRICKLIN
Director of Athletics
Mississippi State University

The Southeastern Conference has a proud past with numerous historical moments highlighting its eight decades of intercollegiate athletics. One of those points of pride arrived when Texas A&M University and the University of Missouri officially joined the 12 other members of the Southeastern Conference. We are pleased to welcome both schools into the greatest collegiate conference in the nation. The institutions of the Southeastern Conference hold much in common, including a desire to compete at the highest levels in all we do. Even further, Texas A&M and Mississippi State specifically share a unique kinship, from school color to proud military heritage, from land-grant status to a research-intensive education. It is with a tremendous amount of excitement that Mississippi State University welcomes Texas A&M University into the Southeastern Conference.



[08] RECORD-SETTING SEASON

During a football season that fell short of expectations, kicker Randy Bullock was a major bright spot, closing out his Aggie career with a record-setting senior season. After leading the nation in field goals, Bullock earned consensus All-American honors and won the Lou Groza Place-kicker Award. Bullock took down the second-oldest record in the Aggie record book by eclipsing the single season scoring record set by Joel Hunt in 1927. His hard work was rewarded when he was selected in the fourth round of the NFL Draft by the Houston Texans.

Bullock's Record-Setting Season

Season FGs: 29 (21 by Scott Slater, 1986)

Season FG accuracy (min. 15 att.): .879 (.833 by Terrence Kitchens, 2000)

Season PATs: 56 (51 by Terry Venetoulias, 1993/Bullock, 2009)

Season scoring: 143 (128 by Joel Hunt, 1927)

Career FGs: 63 (60 by Kyle Bryant, 1994-97)

Career FG accuracy: .788 (.747 by Todd Pogram, 2002-05)

Career scoring: 366 (325 by Kyle Bryant, 1994-97)

*Ole
Miss*

ROSS BJORK
Director of Athletics
University of Mississippi

From my time in the Big 12, I am very familiar with the tradition and passion surrounding Texas A&M Athletics. It's exciting to see them bring their own personality while raising the level of competition in what is already the best conference in the nation. I'm especially thrilled for our growing alumni base in Texas and for the opportunity to play in front of those great Rebels on a regular basis. Hotty Toddy, and welcome Aggie Nation to the SEC!

WELCOME
TO THE





[09] CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION

Several construction projects made big headlines in 2012. Olsen Field at Blue Bell Park reopened in February, just in time for the first game of the 2012 baseball season. The Memorial Student Center reopened on April 21 after nearly three years of renovations. For three decades, the 17-story Plaza Hotel was an extension of campus until it was imploded in May. Construction began in the spring and was recently completed for the Davis Player Development Center – a state-of-the-art, 20,000-square-foot strength and conditioning facility. The Bright Football Complex

main lobby area will soon be renovated to provide enhanced recruiting functions, and a new Sports Nutrition Center will be constructed on the second floor outdoor plaza area facing Kyle Field. Speaking of Kyle Field, no project has received more attention than the redevelopment plans for the future of the 83,000-seat stadium. In April, Texas A&M selected Populous, one of the world's premier sports facility design firms, to lead the design study phase of the "Home of the 12th Man." Plans and more details are expected to be released this fall.



WELCOME
TO THE



HARRIS PASTIDES
President
University of South Carolina

On behalf of the University of South Carolina, I am sending warmest congratulations to President R. Bowen Loftin and the Texas A&M family on its entry into the Southeastern Conference. I know the Gamecock Nation joins me in celebrating this new era and anticipates exciting competition from a worthy opponent and collaboration wherever the opportunities arise. From the gridiron to the baseball diamond, from the basketball court to the soccer field and beyond, the mighty Gamecocks extend a hearty welcome to all Aggie fans.

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[10] SPRING IN THEIR STEP

The first spring football camp under new head coach Kevin Sumlin was all about change for the Aggie football program. The new coaching staff brought a whole new level of energy and enthusiasm to the practice field, with music providing the background to the frantic pace of spring drills. There was a changing of the guard at quarterback, with the starting job up for grabs.

SEC logos began appearing all around the facilities. Construction began on a brand new weight room facility. And amongst all the chaos, the players had to learn new schemes on offense and defense, as former Texas Tech gunslinger Kliff Kingsbury and former Marshall head coach Mark Snyder took over the reigns, respectively.



T
JIMMY G. CHEEK
Chancellor
University of Tennessee

Even though my blood runs orange now,
I am very happy to welcome my alma mater, Texas A&M, to the SEC. We look forward to a great and competitive relationship. Go Vols!

WELCOME
TO THE
SOUTHEASTERN
SEC
CONFERENCE

[11] NOT ACCORDING TO PLAN

Billy Kennedy was preparing to begin his first season at the helm of the Aggie men's basketball program when neck and shoulder pain ultimately forced him to take a leave of absence from the team to undergo testing. Those tests revealed that Kennedy was facing an early onset of Parkinson's disease. Associate head coach Glynn Cyprien took over for Kennedy until he returned to the court in mid-November.



[12] GRADUATION GIFT

On the day he was scheduled to graduate, Ross Stripling made history on the mound, throwing the 11th no-hitter in Texas A&M history against San Diego State in a 1-0 victory. The senior right-hander pitched the game of his life, allowing only one walk while striking out seven during his nearly perfect outing. It was the first no-hitter for Stripling at any level and the first that head coach Rob Childress had ever been a part of as well. **AI**

JASON MCCONNELL '01 AND TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS



WELCOME
TO THE



JAMES FRANKLIN
Head Football Coach
Vanderbilt University

I wish Missouri and Texas A&M all the success in the world. I think they're going to have a lot of success this year. They're great coaches, great programs, and I wish those guys a whole lot of success.

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IN MEMORY OF
Frank William "Will" Wearden Jr.
December 24, 1978 - May 14, 2012

Aggie Catholic, Frank William "Will" Wearden Jr., joined the Communion of Saints on Monday, May 14, 2012. Will was born on December 24, 1978, in Victoria to Frank W. and Gloria Rosse Wearden.

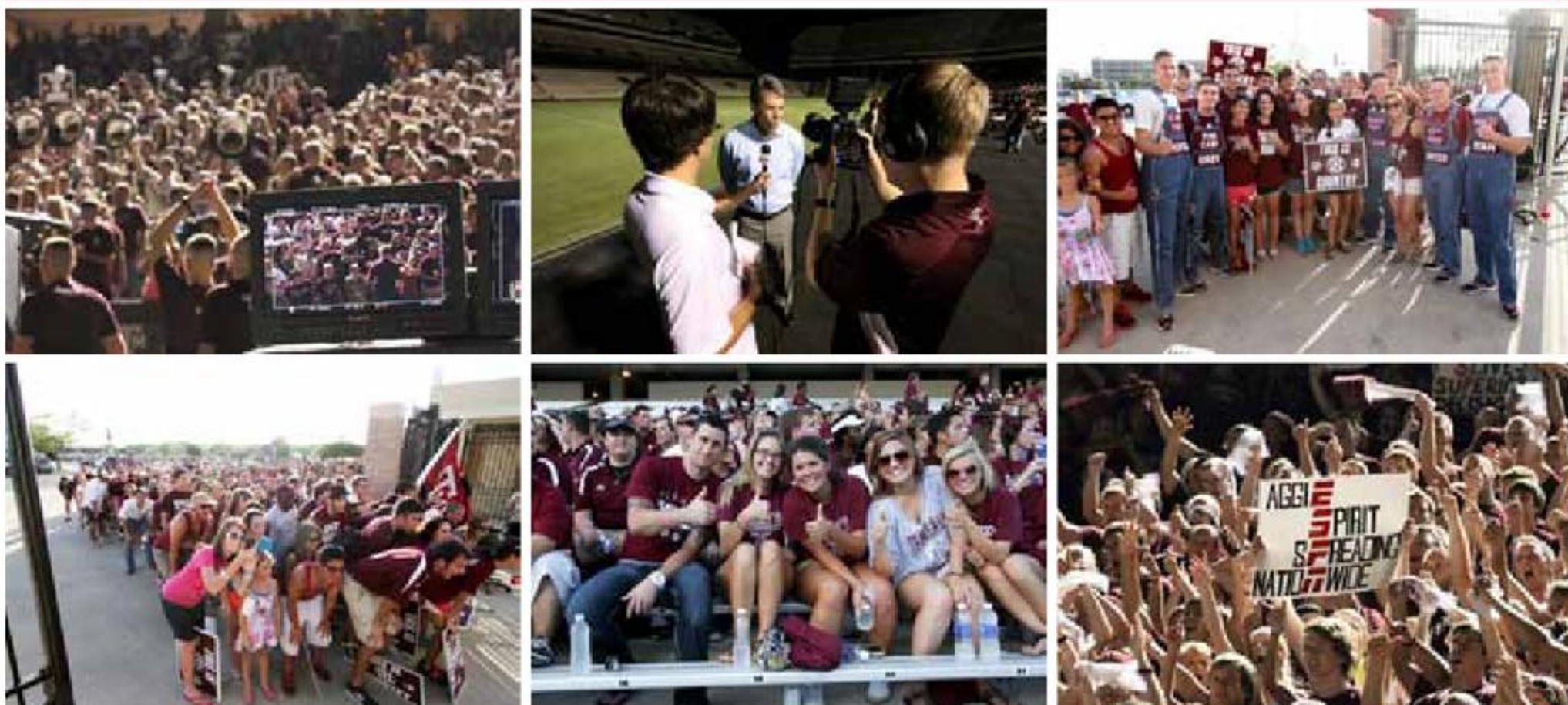
Will graduated from St. Joseph High School in 1997, where he was a three year football letterman at center, a team captain, and earned All-District honors.

Will was currently a student at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, where he was studying Soil Science. Will attended Texas A&M University in College Station for four years and was a proud member of the Texas Aggie Corps of Cadets, Company L-1 and Parsons Mounted Cavalry. He was proud to contribute to Fightin' Texas Aggie Bonfire. He served in Operation Iraqi Freedom, where he earned the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Army Commendation Medal and the Presidential Unit Citation for his service with the 1-6 Infantry Regiment, 1st Armored Division, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, out of Baumholder, Germany. Upon his return, he was able to participate as a veteran in the Wounded Warrior Weekend project.

Will's love for people led him to volunteer at the Riding Therapy Center in Victoria. He loved the outdoors and was a tree climber, a skydiver, a world traveler, a horseback rider, a campfire builder and a story teller. He loved philosophy, family and Texas music and was a great dancer. With his passing, the choir of angels gained an incredible tenor; his family and friends look forward to hearing him sing in heaven.

Editor's Note: If you would like to remember an Aggie in our 12th Man section, email us at editor@aggiemag.com

(above) Texas A&M football coach Kevin Sumlin, wide receiver Ryan Swope, linebacker Sean Porter and offensive lineman Luke Joeckel sign autographs and pose for pictures with Aggie fans during SEC Media Days in Hoover, Ala. **(below)** Over 3,000 Aggies spent a rare Tuesday evening at Kyle Field in July to stage a Midnight Yell for the College GameDay commercial they helped win during a national voting contest in May. The 30-second promo will debut in September.



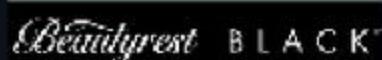


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